



Arizona Department of Homeland Security
Operation Stonegarden (OPSG) Grant Program
Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

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1. Who is eligible to receive Operation Stonegarden (OPSG) Grant Program funding?

State, municipal, county and Tribal law enforcement agencies in Arizona with AZ Peace Officer Standards and Training Commission (POST) certified law enforcement officers who are able to work patrols in support of the Customs and Border Protection (CBP)/Border Patrol (BP) mission are eligible. Grant recipients must submit an Operations Plan to their respective Sheriff of a county that borders Mexico to be eligible for funding. The County Sheriff has final approval authority on which agencies are to be included as part of the consolidated Operations Order for a county. Traditionally, the OPSG grant is reserved for agencies within 100 miles of the border and where there is a strong Border Patrol presence to coordinate OPSG activities.

2. What is the normal performance period for OPSG funds?

The performance period for OPSG Overtime/Mileage grants and Equipment grants will be determined by AZDOHS and is based on FEMA grant funding criteria. Agencies normally submit their Operations Plans to their respective county Sheriff in the spring proceeding the awarding of funds in the fall. Funds are usually awarded in the August/September timeframe, depending on final award and approval of Operations Orders from the CBP/BP and the United States Department of Homeland Security.

3. What is the role of the Arizona Department of Homeland Security (AZDOHS) in the Operation Stonegarden Grant Program (OPSG)?

Through a written agreement with the Sheriffs of the four counties in Arizona that share an international border with Mexico, AZDOHS administers the OPSG grant.

4. What is the role of the Customs and Border Protection (CBP)/Border Patrol (BP) in OPSG?

Border Patrol is the lead agency for operations under the Operation Stonegarden program. Consistent with grant guidance, OPSG funded activities and equipment shall support the Border Patrol mission. All OPSG activities must be pre-coordinated with your local Border Patrol Station OPSG Coordinator

5. What is the role of the County Sheriff in OPSG?

Apart from participating in OPSG operations and activities, the County Sheriff's departments of each of the border counties anchor the Operation Stonegarden Working Groups that meet to allocate funding. The County Sheriff's offices are also in charge of preparing and submitting the county level Operations Plans for Operation Stonegarden each year. These Operations Plans are used to set the overall policy for Operation Stonegarden within a county and also serve as the request or application for Operation Stonegarden grant funding to the Federal Government.

6. What is the role of the Operation Stonegarden Working Group?

The primary function of the Operation Stonegarden Working Group as designated in the OPSG Oversight Committee Operating Principles is to meet to allocate available OPSG funding. In making allocation decisions, the OPSG Working Groups take into account various factors, including the need for funding to certain agencies based on the illicit activity occurring in an area and the impact that the funding will have in that area in combating transnational threats. Other items such as the available manpower of an agency, past performance under OPSG, past compliance with reporting requirements and grant guidelines, the quality of the OPSG plan/equipment request and other factors all can be taken into account by the OPSG working group in making allocation decisions. The OPSG Working Groups meet on an as needed basis. The Working Groups consist of representatives from:

- Border County Sheriff
- Border Patrol
- Up to two (2) municipal law enforcement agencies (two-year term)
- Tribal law enforcement agency (if applicable) (two-year term)
- Arizona Department of Public Safety
- Arizona Department of Homeland Security

7. What type of equipment may be requested by an agency in an Operation Stonegarden Operations Order?

Any equipment that is allowable under the Operation Stonegarden section of the Federal Authorized Equipment List (AEL) found at www.rkb.us may be requested on the Operations Order. Additional items, such as non-CBRNE off-road 4x4 vehicles, ATV trailers and spike strips that are not on the AEL have also been awarded a waiver by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security and are eligible under the OPSG grant. Operations Orders that include items that are not on the AEL should be discussed with AZDOHS and Border Patrol prior to submittal.

8. May an agency exceed the approved quantity limit on a type of equipment if the agency is able to find a lower priced quote on the equipment?

No, an agency will only be reimbursed for up to the quantity of equipment items as sub awarded by AZDOHS. If an agency incurs a savings on a grant, the remaining amount of funds will go back to the respective county OPSG Working Group for reallocation.

9. If money is remaining after purchasing all of the approved equipment, may that agency be approved for a modification to purchase another type of equipment?

No, if an agency incurs a savings on a grant from the awarded amount, the remaining amount of funds will go back to the county OPSG working group for reallocation.

10. What is the applicable guidance on the use of dispatchers?

Dispatcher overtime is allowable under the grant program; however OPSG participants need to be aware that there are strict requirements for their use under OPSG. Dispatcher's overtime is only reimbursable for dispatchers working in direct support of peace officers working OPSG operations. The ratio of dispatchers to officers must be in alignment with the law enforcement agency's local policy. This policy and any related expenditures should be reasonable (i.e. one dispatcher for each OPSG officer working would not normally be considered "reasonable"). Dispatchers should also be utilized strictly for dispatch duties while working Operation Stonegarden, and should not be assigned to perform administrative tasks not directly related to dispatch duties. Dispatcher overtime must be in an approved Operations Order.

11. If an agency purchased a vehicle under OPSG, may this vehicle be used for purposes other than Operation Stonegarden?

No, the vehicle is to be used exclusively for OPSG purposes. There is one exception to that rule; if necessary, the OPSG vehicle can be used in the case of a serious life/safety emergency.

12. If an agency was approved to purchase equipment to outfit vehicles (i.e. cameras, license plate readers), may this equipment be installed in a vehicle that is used for routine patrols?

Yes, as long as that vehicle will also be used on at least an intermittent basis for OPSG activities.

13. What are some common items that are requested but are not allowable under the grant?

Some of the common items that are often requested, but are not allowable under the grant are: weapons and weapon mounted systems, drug detecting canines, infrastructure hardening items, and non 4x4 vehicles.

14. Do all operations need to be pre-coordinated with the Border Patrol Sector?

Yes, all OPSG operations must be pre-coordinated with the respective Border Patrol Sector Station. Activities that are not pre-coordinated as stipulated by your Border Patrol Sector Station are not eligible for reimbursement.

15. What is the reimbursement rate for mileage?

The Arizona State reimbursement rate for mileage is currently \$.445 per mile. This amount is designed to cover both fuel and maintenance costs for vehicles used in support of OPSG operations.

16. Line Item Budget Cost Overruns ("The 10% rule")

The 10% rule allows agencies to exceed expenditures on an individual line item within their grant by up to 10% of the total grant amount or \$25,000, whichever is less, as long as there is a corresponding under-expenditure of another line item within the grant to offset the over-expenditure. This applies to the mileage line item and the overtime line item on mileage and overtime grants and it applies to different items of equipment on equipment grants.

For example, if a law enforcement agency was awarded a grant for \$112,000, with a \$100,000 line item for “overtime” and a \$12,000 line item for “mileage” expenses, the agency is permitted to exceed either their overtime or mileage expenditures by \$11,200 as long as they under-expend from the other line item by an equal amount to offset the over-expenditure. In other words, the agency is still required to stay within the overall grant amount of \$112,000.

The same rule applies to equipment grants (each separate type of equipment is considered a “line item”). An agency is authorized to utilize the 10% (or \$25,000 rule, whichever is less) without prior approval from AZDOHS or the OPSG working group. Agencies must not change the budget listed in their reimbursement request cover sheet when executing the 10% rule. Modifications that exceed the 10% or \$25,000 limit must be approved by the OPSG Working Group.

17. If an agency was awarded funding to purchase an item of equipment, but due to circumstances, would prefer to purchase a different item of equipment with the funding, how should that agency proceed?

Mid-cycle grant modifications under OPSG are discouraged. Instead, that agency should forgo the purchase and allow the funding to revert to the county OPSG working group for their county by making note of this on their next Quarterly Programmatic Report (funds that are unspent at the end of the grant performance period also revert to the county OPSG working group). When the grant performance period is complete, the county OPSG working groups will meet to reallocate the reverted fallout funding. All agencies will have an opportunity to apply for and compete for this funding with the other OPSG law enforcement agencies in the county.

18. What is the Quarterly Programmatic Reporting requirement on this grant?

Quarterly Programmatic Reports are required for each and every individual grant, including mileage/overtime grants and equipment grants. A separate report is due for each quarter covered by the grant period listed in the subgrantee agreement, regardless of whether any expenditure against the grant occurred during the quarter. Reports are due on the 15th day of the month after the end of each quarter:

October 1st through December 31st: Due January 15th

January 1st through March 31st: Due April 15th

April 1st through June 30th: Due July 15th

July 1st through September 30th: Due October 15th

The Quarterly Programmatic Report template can be found at: <http://www.azdohs.gov/grants/>

19. What is the primary purpose of Operation Stonegarden?

The primary purpose of Operation Stonegarden is for high-visibility, uniformed patrols in marked patrol vehicles along routes from the international border into the United States and for certain outbound operations or in accordance with approved operational deployments. Agencies should also be careful to ensure that OPSG grant funds are not used to supplant inherent routine patrols.

20. Can Operation Stonegarden funds be used for field training?

No, training is not an allowable expense under the grant, except for backfill and overtime costs related to attending US Code Title 19 training for Port-of-Entry Operations provided by CBP Office of Field Operations.

21. Can Operation Stonegarden funds be used for detention and transport costs?

No, detention and transport costs are not currently covered under the Operation Stonegarden program in Arizona.

22. What is the policy on grant extensions?

Grant period extensions for overtime and mileage grants will not be accepted because the new grant year funding is usually available for overtime and mileage by the time the previous year's grant expires. Grant period extensions on equipment grants only *may be* considered if there is strong and adequate justification. Extension requests up to 3-months require AZDOHS approval. Extension requests for more than 3-months require approval by the county OPSG Working Group. The Extension Request Form can be found at the following link: <http://www.azdohs.gov/grants/>

23. What types of costs are allowable under the OPSG grant?

Overtime, mileage, travel and equipment expenses are the primary categories of funding for OPSG. The overtime line item of a grant can also be used for expenses such as dispatcher overtime costs, costs to bring a part-time law enforcement officer up to 40 hours full-time status and costs to pay reserve AZ POST-certified law enforcement officers. Overtime for specific classifications of employees must be in an approved Operations Order. All law enforcement officers working OPSG activities must be AZ POST-certified law enforcement officers. FEMA Grants Program Directorate Information Bulletin #321 includes

other costs that could be allowable under OPSG:

<http://www.fema.gov/pdf/government/grant/bulletins/info321.pdf>.

24. At the completion of the grant performance period, what is an OPSG agency required to do?

All stakeholders are required to submit the following within specified time periods after the end of the performance period:

- E-mail the Final Quarterly Programmatic Report to AZDOHS at lsinghurse@azdohs.gov. Required within 15-days. (<http://www.azdohs.gov/Grants/index.asp#Forms>)
- Mail the Final Reimbursement Request Form and all supporting documentation to AZDOHS. Required within 45-days.
- E-mail the Property Control Form (Equipment List) (if applicable) to AZDOHS at wseltzer@azdohs.gov. Required within 45-days. (<http://www.azdohs.gov/Grants/index.asp#Forms>)
- E-mail the Grant Funded Typed Resource Report (GFTRR) form to AZDOHS at wseltzer@azdohs.gov. Required within 45-days. (<http://www.azdohs.gov/Documents/Grants/GrantFundedTypedResourceReport.xlsx>).

25. Can our agency be reimbursed for costs related to salaried (“exempt”) law enforcement personnel working OPSG?

Exempt law enforcement officers (those compensated as salaried as opposed to hourly) may work and be reimbursed for OPSG operations under the following criteria:

- If they are acting in a non-supervisory role
- Participation in OPSG must be in compliance with the United States Code of Financial Regulations (CFR) number 2 CFR Part 225 – Cost Principles for State, Local and Tribal Governments (OMB Circular A-87)
 - Appendix A.C.1.e “Be consistent with policies, regulations, and procedures that apply uniformly to both Federal awards and other activities of the governmental unit.”
 - (http://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?c=ecfr&tpl=/ecfrbrowse/Title02/2cfr225_main_02.tpl)
- In compliance with the agency’s local Human Resources/Personnel policies related to exempt employees and overtime allowability
- The subrecipient policy must be pre-approved by AZDOHS.

26. Does equipment purchased with Operation Stonegarden funds require labeling?

When practicable, all equipment items purchased with Homeland Security grant funds, including Operation Stonegarden funds, are required to display a decal or other marking that states “Purchased with funds provided by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security”. Please refer to the following link for more information: <http://www.azdohs.gov/Documents/Grants/FactSheetEquipmentMarking.pdf>

27. What types of “employee related expenses” (ERE) or benefit costs can be charged to the Operation Stonegarden grant?

ERE/benefits are allowable if they are reasonable, are required by law or local policy, and are costs that are associated with an officer’s participation in OPSG. They must be an ERE/benefit cost that increases based on the overtime hours worked as a result of participation in OPSG activities (“Variable Expenses”). Benefit costs that are a flat fee per employee (“Fixed Expenses”) are not an allowable reimbursement.

28. Where can an agency obtain more information on the Operation Stonegarden Grant Program?

For further questions, please contact William D. Seltzer, OPSG Strategic Planner at (602) 542-7044 or wseltzer@azdohs.gov.